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THE HOUSE OF
LA GRANDE MARQUE, AT COGNAC
AND THE CHARENTE DISTRICT.

(From the Western Times.)

A correspondent writes:—"Having received an invitation from Mr. Victor Jouannet, the managing director of that extensive brandy house at Cognac, which is known in England under the title of La Grande Marque, I availed myself of it in order to inspect their enormous stock, and also that I might obtain some general information respecting the production of brandy in the Charante district. The Charante district, or as we should call it in England, the county of Charente, is one of the most interesting parts of France. This is owing to its production of brandy, the finest and most delicate spirit that can be distilled, and represents one of the most important sources of the general wealth of France. The largest town in the district is Angouleme, but Cognac, although having a population of only about 9,000, is the most important. This town is situated in the neighbourhood of the finest brandy producing vineyards, known as the champagne district of Cognac. The district which surrounds this and produces brandy next in quality and value is called Borderies, and the last, or as I may say the third growth, is produced in the outside district which extends round the towns of Angouleme, Saintes and Mirambeau, and almost to the banks of the river Garonne. This is called the Bois district. The pure Cognac brandy is distilled from wine grown in the three districts, Champagne, Borderies, and Bois, and this the leading houses of Cognac are most anxious to preserve in that native purity which has made Cognac so famous. Any merchant is regarded as acting fraudulently who dares to mix with the brandy of Charente district spurious spirit, or even spirit made from wine grown in any other district. The average crop of the Charente district is about 600 gallons of wine per acre, and the surface cultivated being 250,000 acres yield about 150,000,000 gallons, which, when distilled, represent 15,000,000 gallons as the average annual yield of brandy. It is the general impression in England that the distillation of brandy is performed by the Cognac houses, and that large firms are necessarily holders of large farms; but the brandy merchants are no more producers than our brewers are culivators of hops and barley. No large farms indeed exist in the Charente district. It is stated on good authority that there are not five proprietors who hold 75 acres of vineyard, not ten landowners possessing 40 acres, while holders of 12 acres do not exceed 30 in number. As in England the farmer goes to market with the sample of corn, so in the Charente district the French farmer attends the Cognac market with samples of his brandy, and thus the trade have to make up their stocks by the purchase of an innumerable number of small parcels. The stores of La Grande Marque, which are situated at the south end of the park of the town of Cognac, cover two acres of ground and hold 25,000 hogsheads, which contain about one and a half million gallons of the finest brandy that could be purchased, including the celebrated vintages of 1851, 1845, and 1835. To accumulate this enormous stock, purchases had to be made with some thousands of different farmers, and the value is of such an extent that it is insured with eighteen different Insurance Companies. The quality of the different samples of brandy varies very considerably, so that the superiority of the stock of a Cognac house depends entirely upon great judgment in their selections and the holding sufficient capital to be always able to buy at the right time and direct from the farmers."

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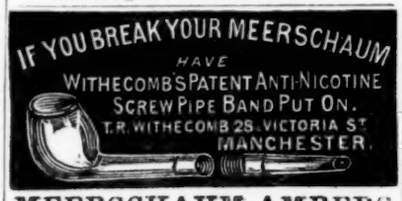

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Are excellent for Children from Three Months to Twelve Years.

PRITCHARD'S TEETHING AND FEVER POWDERS are excellent when Children are cross, feverish, or restless.

PRITCHARD'S TEETHING AND FEVER POWDERS are recommended as an Antibilious Aperient for Adults, removing nervous and bilious head-ache, &c.

PRITCHARD'S CELEBRATED TEETHING AND FEVER POWDERS are daily becoming more sensibly appreciated. The following are a few of the numberless Testimonials the Proprietor is daily receiving of their truly wonderful and valuable effects:—

Testimonial from the Rev. R. Webster Boat.

The Rev. R. Webster Boat has much pleasure in bearing testimony to the value of Mr. Pritchard's "Teething and Fever Powders," which have been *most useful* to his children, not only in Teething, but at other times.

He never likes to be without them, and recommends their use to all his friends who have young children.

Pensnett Parsonage, near Dudley, Jan. 8th, 1864.

"Romiley, near Stockport, May 8th, 1865.

"Dear Sir,—Enclosed are 15 stamps, please to send me a packet of your invaluable 'Teething Powders,' they have saved me pounds. I can safely say that, if parents only knew the value of them and would give them to their children, many lives would thus be saved.—Yours truly,
"J. H. STEWART.

"Mr. Pritchard, Manchester."

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SIXPENNY IMPERIAL FEEDING BOTTLES.
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The only maker in England. 4 shapes £150. 5 shapes £180.

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ELECT, OR LADIES' DOG CART,
Hung low, and easy of access, suitable for Cob or Horse.—**Price £35 to £40,** according to finish.

G.R. Allinson, General Manchester Warehouse) Families supplied. Any length cut from the Piece at Wholesale Prices. **(54 and 54a, High-street, and 13, Church-street.**

[LIVING MEN OF LETTERS.]

MR. CHARLES DICKENS.

THE world, with its fashions, passeth away. We have forgotten to call Dickens "Boz;" he has forgotten to be illustrated by Phiz. If we fail to be moved at his tender anecdote, "that a younger brother who was called Moses from some remembrance of the vicar of Wakefield, which, being pronounced through the nose and with a cold became Boses, and hence, affectionately and diminutively, Boz," if we fail to be moved at *this* anecdote, shall we be blamed? No, even though the great magician himself has thought it worthy of preservation.

Here is this clever little man, cram full of observation, close upon sixty years of age, and yet looking ten years younger, a good walker, lithe, active, reddened with country air (very much reddened, although so great a worker), amongst us again, and his *Edwin Drood* will make our booksellers busy. He is like the Queen in regard to West-end tradesmen—only *they* never see Her Majesty—his work will give a sort of motive power to thousands of shops. He has left the "garish footlights" of the public reader, and as he said well, advertising his own book, he is now entered once more into mute relations with us and among us, visiting our homes and looking up from his dumb but eloquent pages into our houses. He has come all the way from America, where they made a little god of him, and where he "laid down a third ocean telegraph" of goodwill and love between England and Yankee Land. So he told us himself, quoting himself three times in one speech, never saying one word about English Literature, for which he answered to the toast, and of which he was selected by four hundred living authors who stood and cheered him. Shakespere, Chaucer, Spenser, Coleridge, Wordsworth, Scott, where were they? Nowhere. Dickens does not heed them, but waves his hands, as if confirming the company who had made him their guest, and quotes himself a fourth time—"And so in the words of Tiny Tim I say, God bless all of us."

Do you see the man now? You have seen plenty of his photographs, a manly, handsome, hard-lined face, full of feeling, tenderness, and tears. But it is feeling chiefly for his own thronging creations. He is the greatest creator of character that we have had since Shakespere, but there is this difference, Shakespere finished his works wonderfully. Take two instances, Horatio and James Gurney. The last has only to say, "good leave, good Philip," only three words actually, and yet is made to say them so that he lives for ever as a bustling, active, good-humoured serving-man. He is all alive, and so for that are Dickens's characters, but then Dickens has never created a Caliban, which is one small difference, and he has never given us a character that was not overloaded, exaggerated, eccentric, singular, humorous, foolish, extravagant, repetitive, and unreal as well as real. Hence staid people ask, "where did Mr. Dickens meet all his characters? Where do they live?" And eccentric people are pointed out as the originals of such a one or such another. "My dear sir, he was the original Pickwick, I *know* it." Whereas the original Pickwick lay, entirely we suspect, in the brain of his first illustrator, Mr. Seymour, to whose sketches the original *Pickwick Papers* were written up. And here a word:—of all transparent shams in the world the British Publisher is the greatest. He is supposed to suggest or to at least read and select the works brought to him, to exercise a sort of trade knowledge, Mœcenas-like cleverness with, and patronage in favour of, young authors. He does nothing of the sort, but he rejects five times at least *Vanity Fair*, he plunges the very cleverest woman writer we have had for years into despair by rejecting *Jane Eyre* six times; he rejects *Robinson Crusoe* twelve times; that is, twelve, aye about twenty publishers refused that transcendent work; and the present race of publishers is about equally stupid or worse. Chapman and Hall commissioned Dickens to write the *libretto*, or rather *libretti*, as the work came out in parts, to Seymour's Cockney Sketches. Here really you find publishers exercising some motive power—but how? Seymour died, and Dickens got free and out of the incongruous reports of the proceedings of the Pickwick Club, made himself a famous name—small thanks to the publishers.

It will be of little use for us to criticize Dickens's works seriatim. Born at Landport, in Devonshire, of a father who was a customs officer, and after that a newspaper reporter, Dickens, like his own Toots, "blowed early," and the flower was good. The *Morning Chronicle*, fresh from the supposititious mornings at Bow Street, inserted sketches by Boz, Macrone published and the town took them. This was in 1836, getting on for forty years ago. Then came a comic opera and some poems in Keepsakes, and then a life of long, hard, and conscientious labour at certain works, *Pickwick*, *Oliver Twist*—so finely illustrated by Cruikshank that the *Quarterly* thirty years ago suggested what ought long ago to have been done, the raising of that artist to the Academy—then *Nicholas Nickleby*, and so on. You can get a dry list of his works anywhere. One thing to be particularly noticed in this artist was that he was essentially English in his method; that when he kept himself within bounds he imitated in purity of English and conciseness of thought Fielding himself, in those best of works of his, his preliminary essays. His humour was always essentially broad, genial, and exaggerative. He paints in *pasticcio*, and lays on his colours with a fat brush; he would be like Falstaff, not knocked down by a merely human fist, but "fillipped by a three-man beetle." So, too, in his last book, when he pictures a man awakening from an opium dream, he makes the old wretch who keeps the shop declare that she forms her opium pipes from penny stone ink bottles!—each of which would contain at least three hundred times as much opium as a real opium pipe holds! So, too, in describing a thing which never occurred possibly, spontaneous combustion, Dickens makes the body disappear, all but a greasy residue like that left by thick paper smoke! By this method Dickens has tickled hundreds of dull intellects, who are always pleased with exaggeration, just as a child is delighted with a pantomimic mask; but he displeases fine critics. "Ah," said Dr. Maginn, "this young man goes up like a rocket, but he will come down like the stick.

Maginn was wrong. The inexhaustible industry of Dickens, the *bonhommie*, the wonderful creative power bore down all enemies. Simple people were persuaded that all was gospel in the great magician's books. The most extravagant characters were "drawn from the life;" impossible monsters were said to have lived, "they are so strange, you know, and so lifelike, Dickens *must* have seen them." And like a wonderful caricaturist, full of vigour and fun, Dickens went on painting his black villains, his pure angels, his Twists, his Sykes, his Fagans, and his Mollies,

his benevolent Cheerybles, his impetuous Nicklebys, his Squeers, and his Mr. and Mrs. Dombeys. But we who know the world, dear Reader—let us be egotistic and praise each other—know that "white's not so white, nor black so very black." *Est modus in rebus*, even jolly Mark Tapley is a pure fiction, seen only by the intellectual eye of Boz. Impetuous and generous, Dickens believes in his own truth, just as much as a man afflicted with colour-blindness believes that all things are brown. He would give that man the lie who dared to tell him else—that opium could not be smoked in any degree of safety, at least out of penny ink-bottles, or that a window "giving itself" to a garden or a street was good English. When Mr. Dickens had a domestic quarrel he was, we believe, greatly in the right, but he thought himself so thoroughly so that he quarrelled with *Punch* for not publishing his *exparte* statement in its pages, and committed the dreadful solecism of publishing the whole matter in his own paper, and in as many papers as he could command. "If any one dare to think otherwise," he said in effect, "he lies most foully."

Dickens is not the very highest type of tale writer, and he has written so much that almost all of it must die. Chuzzlewit, his autobiographical book *David Copperfield*, the *Tale of Two Cities*, some of his Christmas Tales may survive, but the rest are so exaggerated that, like Sam Weller and the stage coachmen, they have already passed away. That which is pretty and poetical in Dickens—except when his pathos rises out of his genius, and then indeed it is great—is generally fond and mawkish. His ideals are impossible; his notion of high life ridiculous. Yet Dickens has been a great success, and has frequented the houses of the best of the aristocracy, but he could not paint there without a caricature—hence his failure. His popularity has been unbounded. No author can pretend to compare with him in this—unless it be Mr. G. W. M. Reynolds, whose tales, they say, sell more largely in Canada and America than Dickens's. Trollope and Thackeray are obscure individuals to Dickens, as regards the public. At a Newsvendor's Dinner, let us say, he "draws" better than a lord; his readings have made his own and Mr. Chappell's fortunes; he not only reads himself, but his books are always being read by others, and his sketches are always popular because they always raise a laugh. Such comic ideas, do you see, cries a person who would not understand Moliére, Shakespere, or Sterne; what a funny old stonemason, always to talk of himself in the third person, and to pay a boy threepence a week to drive him home with deadly, well-aimed, and sharp-cutting granite paving stones! So natural, is it not?

Let the reader, too, mark a curious want of grace, softness, and harmony in the mind of this author, as exhibited in his names. His sense of sound must be defective and love discords. All his chief names are cacophonous; his favourites produce and reproduce the sounds of K and N. Thus we have Pickwick, Panks, Newman Noggs, Kit Nubbles, Clennam, Linkinwater, Flintwinch, Carker, Kenwigs, Nicholas Nickleby and Kate Nickleby. Then next in favour we find Z and double G, in such typical names as Fezziwigg, Chuzzlewit, Figg, Maggy, Miggs, Cheggs, and Wegg. There must be some law which produces the recurrence of these letters.

Let us conclude with what we can say in favour of Dickens. His industry and creative power are immense; they equal that of Gustave Doré, who, at thirty eight, has done forty thousand sketches, and all very like each other! His instincts are all on the right side; he loves the expansive, the generous and the brave; he abhors the mean and cowardly; and in all the rich array of his humorous creations, in all the tearful sorrow, the happy, empty laughter, the intellectual enjoyment he has given us by his observation and wit, he has never raised the laugh on the wrong side. "The creatures," says a writer, "begotten in his fertile brain have peopled ours, and often fill the thoughts of the sailor on his lonely watch, of the squatter in his solitary hut, of the miner deep in the earth, of the wrapped-up traveller as he hurries on with hurricane speed above the earth's surface. Positive mental enjoyment, soundness, happiness, rest, and pleasure has this man given to a larger number of brothers and sisters than any other living soul. God gave him at his birth genius and activity in abundance, and he has been true to his trust. These talents he has multiplied a thousand fold; his 'good words' he has scattered far and wide. Of few great ones can we say as much. Of no one can we say more."

NOTES ON 'CHANGE.

MONEY.

PRAY do not fear that we are about to inflict a dreary dissertation on the flow of bullion from one country to another, on the "tightness" of the money market, or the provisions of the Bank Charter Act. Nothing of the sort. Our remarks shall have reference to money in its best known and most popular form, that is, money being spent. We are inclined to agree with the view of a young lady friend of ours who says "there is no good in money stuck fast in business, or locked up in a stupid old bank where no one can get at it." When a certain fairy asked a Scotchman to name two wishes, the answer was prompt indeed. The mind of the Scot, like that of the illustrious Manchester merchant of old, was "made up," and doubtless had been so for years, as to things most to be coveted in this life, and he replied without the slightest hesitation, "Aw'll just hae a Loch Lomond o' whiskey, and a Ben Lomond o' tobacco." But this Scotchman was more or less of a Highlander, and having probably seen but little of cities and the glory of them, his tastes were comparatively pure. We must do his more commercial Lowland brother the justice to suppose that he would have gone in for something more substantially useful. In fact, such Scotchmen as we wot of on 'Change, would probably differ but little in the nature of their wishes from the rest of the acquisitive swarm of the "boards."

Let us imagine the same lightfooted little fairy to have escaped the manifold dangers which, for such a delicate creature, would beset all approaches to a manufacturing town, and to have arrived, say at Stalybridge or Snigbrook. Suppose her to have selected for her boon, a mighty manufacturer of the district, and to have drooped her daintly ear to catch the answer to his gentle questioning. Have you any doubt as to what the answer would be? We haven't the slightest. "Cotton deawn, and goods hup" to a moral certainty. Let our fairy continue her interrogations through every department of our commerce; let her, in fact, visit the Royal Exchange on a Tuesday, and question its seething contents; we are convinced that, in substance, the answers would be all alike, and in words, only varied by the substitution of shares, shirtings, produce, or other worldly goods; though, haply, some half suffocated wretch, less in need of money than the breath of life, might ask for a "new Exchange and perpetual exile to the present directors." Torn, draggled, and generally dishevelled, our poor fairy would be glad enough to escape from the dreadful den; though indeed she might at the door undergo rude seizure for not being a subscriber. The dear little thing would certainly not *look* like one.

No such blessed visit has ever yet been paid to these parts; yet we seem to go on very much as if it had been. It is constant matter of wonderment to occasional visitors, and must also be so to residents who will bring themselves to reflect on the enormous expenditure going on around them, where all the money comes from; and the question is made doubly perplexing by the fact that every one denies that he is making money at all! If a barrister (we don't add solicitor), artist, doctor, or, in fact, almost any professional man, tells you that he is unfortunate, and is earning but little income, you believe him without reserve; and his statement is generally borne out by the evidences of his daily life. You find such a man spending but little; or, otherwise,

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succumbing in a reasonable time to the consequences of extravagance. Then, again, men outside the pale of commerce have no hesitation in letting you know when they are successful, in asking you to rejoice with them, and in making themselves comfortable accordingly. Did you ever hear a business man say he was doing well or making large profits; or did you ever catch him in the jubilance of prosperity? His moan is constant. No profit, no hope, bad trade, losses and disasters are the burden of his wail, from Snigbrook to Singapore, from Backloan to Bombay. And, even ignoring his own evidence as we must do, though he may be piling up wealth in the midst of all this complaint, and though his face may become sourer as his purse becomes heavier, there will be few outward and visible signs by which you can form an opinion as to whether he is really gaining money or losing it. The man who is treading the downward path is in fact very often the jolliest fellow out. He it is who is ever ready to stand something, from a pint of champagne to a turtle dinner; but, winning or losing, business men seem quite agreed that their expenditure shall offer no clue whatever to the real condition of their finances. Is it considered advisable to conceal the barrenness of the land by an outward display of means; or, on the other hand, to prove the possession of wealth by flinging it about broadcast? We cannot answer; nor can we account for the circumstance that many who tell you they are making nothing, are at the same time spending with a liberality that fills really poor folks with envy.

Now, our object is not to inveigh against the extravagance of the age. That subject has been often and well handled by contemporaries. We are merely anxious to account for the inconsistencies just described; and the solution is not made easier by the fact that many of those who, when saying they are not making money, avow only the truth; but spend away right merrily all the same.

No one will dispute the statement that, during the past few years, the commerce of this district has passed through a terrible ordeal; and though the greatest portion of disaster has probably fallen to the lot of manufacturers, there can be no doubt as to the depression in all the other branches of the cotton trade. Very few, either merchants or middlemen, can have increased their capital. As we cannot well ask for a peep into a man's bank book, we must rely on external evidences in forming our judgment of his condition, and in face of this bad trade and its accompanying long faces, it is truly perplexing to observe how goodly an appearance is maintained withal. Without counting the great abodes of well assured wealth, we find on every road leading out of Manchester a succession of middle-sized houses, the maintenance of which must involve the aggregate expenditure of an enormous sum. We do not now allude to the little "groves," and "views," and "crescents," where dwell the salaried class, but to the "mounts," and "ranges," and "granges," with coach-house and stable at the rear, and a rental suggesting the expenditure of £1000 to £2000 a year. In all the suburbs of Manchester such establishments are legion; and the gorgeous carriages, and still more gorgeous toilettes, to be seen issuing from their precincts, show full plainly that a great deal of money is being spent, whether it is earned or not. Nor do we think the external is at variance with the internal magnificence. That style of art so dear to the newly rich, and dear also at any price, is found in profusion on the walls; and the tables are supplied with costly viands and eke champagne, while a sum is expended on armorial bearings which grandpapa would have considered ample for his annual tailor's bill. The perpetual outgoing of money is not confined even to the domestic department of these establishments; the theatres, concerts, and all places of public amusement, give constant proof of the amount of spare cash always seeking a billet; and when Manchester fails to provide it, Blackpool, Southport, and even the Continent, are made arenas for the exhibition of lavish expenditure, or at least rampant well-to-do-ness.

No fairy has been nigh our dwellings; no one, at least according to their own account, is making any money, and we know that a great many have been losing it. Whence then does the supply come, and if it does not come, "where are we all going to?"

"When my grocer poisons me, they simply fine him," says Alphonse Karr; "but when I poison my grocer they send me to the guillotine."

THE ANTITHESIS OF FOLLOWING THE HOUNDS.—Going to the dogs.

[LOCAL ART TREASURES.]

MR. F. CRAVEN'S COLLECTION OF DRAWINGS.

THE collection of Mr. Frederick Craven, of Hope Lodge, Kersal, is a striking instance of catholicity of taste of a very rare kind. In most cases a certain style of art is fixed upon by the collector, and he limits his purchases to works of a particular class which happens to have suited his taste, and sometimes, but not often, one finds a house containing *very* good and *very* bad pictures at the same time. In the case of Mr. Craven's water-colour drawings, however, all are good, very good of their kind, and many unsurpassed; though their "styles" extend from Rossetti and Maddox Brown, to Topham and Duncan, who may be considered to represent the two poles of Art, the distance between them is so great.

In all, Mr. Craven possesses something over forty drawings, of which eight are by Messrs. Dante G. Rossetti and Ford Madox Brown. Of these, as being not only the highest in merit in every way as works of art, but also of a style least generally known and appreciated, we shall speak first. Mr. Brown's Elijah and the Widow's Son, was the subject of a recent controversy anent the awarding of the prize at the Royal Institution Exhibition last year, and was so recently noticed in these columns, that it may be passed by now. Then there is the same artist's important picture of which the subject is taken from the first scene in *King Lear*, where the King of France leads away the King's youngest daughter, saying,

> Fairest Cordelia, that art most rich, being poor,
> Most choice, forsaken, and most loved, despised:
> Thee and thy virtues here I seize upon;
> Be it lawful; I take up what's cast away.

The picture is on a very large scale and is crowded with figures. In the centre, Lear leans from his throne, looking with anger on Cordelia who is being led off by the King of France; in front kneel the Dukes of Albany and Cornwall, and behind them stand Goneril and Regan; and, on the ground at the King's feet, lies the map with the portion marked Cordelia torn through. As in the Elijah, this picture is full of accessories, all helping to explain the story, and all in keeping; the composition is noble, and the scheme of colour most admirable. The facial expression is, perhaps, more dramatic, or more correctly speaking, theatrical, than in the Elijah, and exception might be taken to the figure of the King of France, as being exaggerated in attitude, and hardly such a type of masculine beauty as could be wished: but the work, as a whole, is a noble one, and its like is not seen often now-a-days. Very charming is the next picture by Mr. Brown—Romeo and Juliet, much smaller than the two others, but most remarkable for the marvellous and almost painful expression of love and anguish, nearly amounting to despair, shown in the face of Juliet, as, with eyes half closed and parted lips, she clasps her arms round her lover, who with one foot in the rope ladder is about to descend from the balcony, but turns half back to kiss her neck. Romeo's face is scarcely seen, but passion can be expressed by action as well as face, and there is no failure here. In this as in all his pictures Mr. Brown is magnificent in colour; the "rosy light of dawn" is beautifully given. The most interesting of this great artist's work is the fourth of the series. It is one of his latest; in fact we believe it is not finished. The subject is the discovery by Haidée and her attendant, of Don Juan senseless on the shore, after the shipwreck, and most charmingly it is represented. The young Juan lies naked on the shore—

> And like a wither'd lily on the land
> His slender frame and pallid aspect lay,
> As fair a thing as e'er was formed of clay?

Had Byron written his poem after seeing Mr. Brown's picture, the words and the painting could not have been in closer harmony with each other; and, be it understood, it is easier to *write* to an outward and visible form, than to *paint* from an inward and spiritual poetic creation. Haidée's attendant maid leans over the senseless boy, one hand on his breast over the heart. Haidée herself stands a few paces off, almost wondering seemingly, and is—

> Distinct, and tall, and fair.
> Her brow was low and white, her cheeks' pure dye
> Like twilight rosy still, with the set sun;
> Short upper lip—sweet lips that make us sigh
> Ever to have seen such.

We must come to the poet himself, in every case, for a description of this picture. There is no better way to write the difference shown in it between Haidée and her maid than in the above lines, painting "the gentle girl," and then

> Her attendant—one
> Young, yet her elder and of brow less grave
> And more robust of figure.

Beautiful drawing, exquisite grace pervade the entire work; but the artist has done more than the poet in the representation of the landscape of the lovely Greek island. Whether it be real or not, no matter: it certainly *realizes* more completely the impressions received from Lord Byron's descriptions than any picture of our time of which the subject is similar.

Between Mr. Madox Brown and Mr. Rossetti there is much artistic sympathy, though Rossetti is more obscure in meaning. Excepting Mr. Burne Jones and Mr. Simeon Solomon, the "chief master of pre-Raphaelitism," as an eminent critic calls Mr. Rossetti, has no rival as a water-colourist in that mysterious and gorgeous quality of colour which we have lost since the time of the great Venetians, a quality of colour which is intended always, and carefully thought out, and not to be confounded with the accidentally harmonious and good colouring of many of our painters, who, failing success with strong colour in a high key, resort to some harmless tone of drab as a motive, but who seem never to start their pictures with any serious intention as to what their theme of colour is to be. The most important picture by Mr. Rossetti belonging to Mr. Craven is The Return of Tibullus to Delia, taken from the second Ode of Tibullus. As in the case of the Don Juan, the poem is the best description: the following is the translation on the frame:—

> Live chaste, dear love, and while I'm far away,
> Be some old dame thy guardian night and day;
> She'll sing thee songs, and when the lamp is lit,
> Ply the full rock and draw long threads from it.
> So unannounced shall I come suddenly;
> Then as thou art, all long and loose thy hair,
> Run to me Delia, run with thy feet bare.

Here, again, the accessories are most completely worked out and the poem carefully followed in all details. Delia on the couch, asleep, her hair flowing, her feet bare; the old dame sits on the floor, and is just ceasing to play and sing to her, as Tibullus enters into the chamber, striding across the sleeping figure of an attendant who lies stretched along the threshold. That the picture is real, is, of course, not its chief merit; but realism is a great merit when united, as in this case, with very high qualities, as a picture of colour and skilful composition. There is a kind of greenish hue over this drawing, very peculiar but very charming withal. Washing Hands, by the same artist, is a very excellent and delightful picture, but like Mr. Rossetti's two other works in Mr. Craven's possession, namely, Hesterna Rosa and Aurora, while beautiful to see it is impossible to describe. Were the three drawings now in a public exhibition, it would be pleasant to say much about them.

By David Cox there are twelve drawings, including the well-known Welsh Funeral, Beeston Castle, and Windsor Park. Amongst the rest is one which is by no means the least beautiful and certainly very instructive, as showing how little need there is for what is called a "fine subject," in order to produce a perfectly successful landscape. The subject is simply some broken undulating ground; a part of a rough road with a cart and horse coming over a ridge, part of a windmill in the middle distance, and a quiet blue and white sky. The colour is sober and harmonious, and the tone perfect.

A picture by Mr. Shields, called Hide, is interesting because it is one of the first he painted in opaque colour, a great change in manner, which, as might be expected, has brought upon him much adverse criticism from those who cannot see that a young artist is sure to change his style more or less often, before he finds the one most suitable to him; and it is hard if in each successive change there is not something superior to the last manner. In the case of this drawing Mr. Shields shows all the grace of form and composition usual in his former work, and, in addition, far more force and solidity than he has ever shown before in his transparent painting.

There is a lovely work by Turner, The Land's End, most exquisite for its grey opalescent colour and beauty of composition; and the other pictures in the collection are by W. Hunt, Holland, De Wint, F. Taylor, Powell, Cattermole, Topham, Duncan, and S. Cooper, and they are all admirable specimens. It is to be regretted that there is no permanent public gallery in Manchester, where works out of collection like this might be seen. No doubt their owners would lend a few at a time, if they knew they would be cared for, when they would object to send to a promiscuous exhibition.

TOWN TALK,

AND THINGS IN GENERAL.

THE ADJOURNMENT OF THE COURT OF RECORD.

WE have been surprised to see only one letter in the papers complaining of the late adjournment of this court to two days after the day for which the jurymen and witnesses had been summoned. But perhaps our surprise was unsophisticated. We should have remembered that it is frivolous complaints for which newspaper correspondents have such an affection. This being a substantial grievance did not incontientaly move them to composition. Mr. Kay, Q.C., the judge at present presiding over the court, is so thoroughly a gentleman that it is almost impossible to think that he would, even for once in a way, make his public duty subordinate to his private convenience; but in the absence of other explanation, it is somewhat peculiar to note that the reports of the late Liverpool assizes, contain accounts of a case having been conducted by Mr. Kay, Q.C. on the identical day so long ago as the beginning of the year appointed for the holding of the Salford Hundred Court of Record, of which he is the judge just now on active duty. This, however, may be a reporter's or a printer's error.

A NEW COMEDIETTA.

The dramatic festival performance of last Friday night brought before a Manchester audience a new comedietta, written expressly for Mr. and Mrs. Kendal, by a Mr. Pheyre Smith. Who the gentleman is who balances the common-placeness of his surname by the originality of his baptismal name, we have not the slightest idea; but his capacity to write a neat little piece is proved! *Uncle's Will* is more attractive than its title. Two young people want to marry one another very much, till "uncle" leaves them a ridiculously large sum of money (£50,000! oh, Mr. Pheyre Smith, why not five?) upon condition that they do marry; whereupon, of course, the pair immediately *don't* want to, as much as they did want to before. In the expression of their mutual distaste, the couple say so many good things, that Mr. Pheyre Smith could well afford to excise the few which are hardly up to the mark of the rest, or of which the manufacture is too obvious. The comedietta, smart throughout, contains one or two strokes of genuine wit, and would be popular in Manchester if only for the many eagerly caught-up reminders which it gives the audience of that domestic relationship between "Miss Madge Robertson" and Mr. Kendal, in which it takes so keen an interest.

'BUS DRIVING BRUTALITY.

A writer to the papers, signing himself "Leguleius," recently narrated a scandalous case of cruelty to animals by a driver of the Manchester Carriage Company, upon the everlasting Oxford Road. The inhabitants and 'bus-riders of that vicinity must be a mean-spirited crew, to write such mendacious accounts of omnibus doings there, if they are not as stated, or to tolerate them, if they are. "Leguleius" tells a story of a horse overdriven till it fell, and furiously driven on again the instant it got up. "Leguleius" narrates this very likely story with a plenitude of pious ejaculation; but he doesn't say that he got on the 'bus and made the brutal driver stop, or even blew him up. Writing to the papers is a namby-pamby way of reprehending barbarism. Drivers will never stop brutality until they know it will infallibly bring down upon them the immediate, personal, and uttered condemnation of both passengers and passers-by. Summoning them is better than writing to the papers. But nothing is so effective as actual personal interference *and strong language*. Passing by in pious horror, like "Leguleius," is not half so Christian, under the circumstances, as a good deal of round swearing. Talk to a 'bus-driver like a gentleman, and he despises you: tell him he's a darned old quadrilateral parallelopiped, and he respects you. But "Leguleius" would probably object to swearing. He should not,

at any rate, object to interfering personally and promptly. Still, writing to the papers is better than doing nothing; and we should thank "Leguleius" for having written, if the pious gentleman's chief object in writing did not appear to have been to puff the Cheadle Omnibus Company. Are we to understand from the tenor of his communication that the Cheadle Omnibus Company is guiltless of the racing, nursing, and unpunctuality which give rise to so much cruelty to animals? Taking the obvious desire of "Leguleius" to give that company a lift, in connection with his exuberant piety and generally stilted style, we are afraid, despite his signature, we must set him down as one of those elderly gentlemen who wear low broad-brimmed hats, and several coils of white choker, and do a little business on commission in the wine and spirit line.

THE "FLOWERS OF THE FOREST," AT THE AMPHITHEATRE.

Now that they have a play at the Amphitheatre which does not bury under its own dead weight the efforts and abilities of a company, one is able to form an opinion of the merits of the performers. The *Flowers of the Forest* has been produced there this week in a manner that shows that a stride forward has been taken. There has evidently been an honest desire to put it on the stage effectively and with care. It is a fine acting play, full of good situations and unctuous and racy character. Side by side with shades of romance and pathos, its author, Mr. Buckstone, has put the lights of comic fun, and keeps up a keen interest in the two interwoven plots. The scenes are chiefly laid among the gipsies—a circumstance which has given Mr. E. B. Herberte ample scope for unrolling some of that fine landscape scenery in which his brush delights to go a-maying; his grouping and quiet colouring of foliage and trees being in several instances particularly happy. The costumes have been as picturesquely dealt with as the scenery. The acting was spirited throughout. Mrs. Egan, in the part of a gipsy woman, shone to advantage. Her monologue, alternately hopeful and despairing, in front of the court-house where her son is being tried for murder, was the gem of the piece, and a really powerful study. Mr. Barfoot as Cheap John and Mr. F. B. Egan as the Kinchin, two racy rogues, proved very amusing, and Miss Clifford gave a most thrilling illustration of a melodramatic "dying fall," at the conclusion of the life of a gipsy king's passionate daughter. Miss E. Macdonald is still as vivacious and humorous as ever. Not least among the evidences of stage improvement are the fine new drop-scene and the general stage management.

PICTURE DEALING EXTRAORDINARY.

A Manchester artist of some repute, received last week the following singular epistle, from a carver, gilder, and picture frame maker, at Snigbruck:—

SIR,—I am a dealer and come to Manchester every week, and I have bought many pictures from artists who have expose them at exhibitions, and tomorrow I am going to meet 2 artists over buying what they have left from exhibitions. I bought 10 pictures for £4 the lot, from one artist as a job, which was at exhibition at £10 down to £2 each. If you can or will sell me a job lot if you like I will meet you bring them at———prompt at four o'clock. Yours,———. If your style suits me I sometimes give a commission.

It has long been one of the grievances (usually treated very good humouredly by the victims) of the artistic and literary professions, that their brain-work and handiwork are placed on the level of a routine manufacturer; and our Snigbruck dealer, who talks so innocently about "job lots" of pictures, is only following in a small way the example of greater capitalists. Notwithstanding the vague promise of a prospective commission from this munificent patron of art, it is needless to say that no "job lot" has found its way from Manchester to the Snigbruck market.

CURIOSITIES OF JOURNALISM.

The proverb says no news is good news, but a practice seems to be springing up of giving as news that which is either not true or the reverse of true. One daily contemporary informed us on Tuesday that the Rev. Mr. Burns had been instituted to the rectory of St. Peter's, Blackley, *vice* the Rev. J. L. Figgins; the fact being that Mr. Burns succeeded Mr. Figgins at St. James's, "Brother" Figgins having been moved on to Blackley. Another contemporary informed us on the same day that the Bishop had appointed Mr. Burns to the rectory and parish church of St. Clement's! Mr. Figgins was indeed, some years since, curate or minister at St. Clement's, which is merely an episcopal chapel, and neither a rectory nor a parish church, but having since been at St. James's, where Mr. Burns is now succeeding him, he seems still capable of affecting the reporter in some manner. Is there Figginism on the brain, or a tendency of Figgins to the head? Our first mentioned contemporary corrected the error on the following day, as he did also another of the same date. In the report of a County Court trial, where a Mr. Beattie had sued a Mr. White about the cost of some teeth, the Judge is made to give a verdict for the plaintiff, damages 10*s*., while the fact was, as the journal explained the next day, the verdict was for the defendant, with costs (probably the 10*s*.) allowed to him. It is not altogether that these are matters of engrossing public interest; still, if they are to be reported, pray let us have the truth about them.

> You might, it is true, have disguised your report,
> But why did you——

make such a mull of the whole thing?

[STUDIES IN NATURAL HISTORY.]

THE DINNER PARTY.

THE sparrows were just commencing to rustle and tweet in the ivy outside my bedroom window in the gray dawn of an early spring morning when I was disturbed by three distinct taps administered by Mrs. Emmerson just about the shoulder blade, as we may imagine the woodpecker tapping the hollow beech tree, though I have always considered the woodpecker indiscreet in having chosen a hollow one. The taps had commenced before I was awake, and had suggested door knocking, so that it was scarcely to be wondered at that my first words were, in my half sleepy condition, "Come in!" I recovered myself just as the third tap descended on my shoulder blade, but still sleepily muttered, "Yes, dear?"

"*We must have the Richardsons to dinner*," said my wife.

Now, the uninformed and unregenerate bachelor would be led to believe from such a remark, that this idea had been carried to bed on the previous evening, and had been brewing or simmering in the lady's brain all the livelong night. I knew better, otherwise my wife would have gone to press with the idea before the wise and early sparrows had gone forth to catch the foolish and early worms. The form of speech adopted at that unusual hour—"*We must have the Richardsons to dinner*"—was so suggestive to me of a domestic female cannibal making her daily preparations in the cannibal kitchen, that I was almost inclined to reply, "Then lay the cloth, and let us eat the Richardsons whilst they are hot;" but as it has never been a habit of mine to beard the lion in his den, or to grapple with Palliser's chilled projectiles in mid flight, I took a quiet stroll through the empty halls of my imagination to try to collect material for the game before me. The silence was not agreeable to Mrs. Emmerson, who, laying aside the woodpecker and taking up apparently a municipal mace, fetched me a severe corker in the back, accompanied with the words, "Do you hear?" Now, thought I to myself, shall I take that mild or bitter? Rapidly selecting the mild, I replied, "Yes, dear." "The Richardsons," said Mrs. E., "asked us, and we have never asked them back." I could not dispute this precise description of the fact, and therefore held my noise. "We might ask the Magwells at the same time." Here was a pretty kettle of fish for a sleepy husband to have to tackle at five o'clock in the morning! I really knew very little of either of the groups mentioned. It is true we had previously partaken of a greasy festival at the hospitable mansion of the Richardsons, and it was not owing to the accomplished cook of the Richardsons, but simply to great physical self-possession on my part, that I had not returned the said dinner with inexpedient rapidity. How we had got there I scarcely knew. The women had met at Southport, or hired donkeys together, and the breezy husband had invited us to dinner; but why a debtor and creditor prandial ledger account should now have to be kept in consequence, was more than I could comprehend, or why I should be called upon to walk the social plank so early in the morning was equally puzzling.

"We must have Maynger," said Mrs. E., continuing her happy train of thought. I should explain that Maynger is a pimpled being, who has the appearance of being a steady reclaimed drunkard, only that he

is not reclaimed. He calls himself a day-waiter and a collector of rents. The last time I had the pleasure of seeing Maynger he was very drunk, and the only rents he seemed to have collected on that occasion were outside his trousers in squares, and not pocketable in any coinage known to Dr. Farr. I detest a man-waiter at any time, and the professional ones have always about them so much that reminds me of stale gravy and wet rats, that very frequently the idea of the Japanese custom of performing upon them the happy despatch steals over me like summer lightning. That I should be called upon to banish little Mary—my waitress—who is as bright and red as a jar full of geraniums about a dinner table, for the forlorn dinginess of that wretched Maynger, made me cringe with subdued ferocity like a brindled dog of mixed origin. "No, I'm dashed if I have Maynger," started involuntarily to my lips, but I suppressed the emotion. I knew I was being whirled along like Mazeppa on the back of fate, and I felt that I had much to go through before my steed could graze at ease beyond the swift Boristhenes. Whenever you get worsted in domestic dialogue it is a pleasure to call your wife "Mum." On this occasion I said: "Ten shillings, his victuals, and a bottle of anything loose, whether gin or Harvey's sauce, Mum; or a pint of your noble port, 1834, banished into two soda bottles, which act like plumpers in the tails of Maynger's dress-coat, and give him the aspect of wanting to sit down, Mum, appear to me an exaggerated sacrifice at the Richardson altar. Could we not disorder their stomachs with Mary as the leading drencher?" I did not, of course, use these precise words; no one does except in print. But whatever I said, the syllables had all to go back the way they came. Mrs. Emmerson literally rammed them down my throat. Maynger was therefore ticked off and passed.

I shall not prolong the account of this early colloquy. The bill of fare had to be gone through from soup to maccaroni cheese. And, mark you, soup could not get itself born singly; it must emerge as twins, because the Richardson soup had so been born, and meanness could not further go if the Richardsons were not trumped in the matter of soup. A plethoric cod, with two pickled walnuts for his dismal eye-balls, was to goggle at some shavings of soles, weltering in sour parsley and butter, at the other end of the table. Cutlets and champagne kidneys were then to march over our prostrate forms. A haunch of Welsh mutton and a cartilaginous capon, with blue legs like an eagle, were afterwards to perform the functions of a garden roller, and level you for some poor little quails with baconed chests; and, after all these—a deathly faintness comes over me as I proceed with the revolting narrative—there were to be college pudding steeped in ovarious lather, a quaking bog of jelly, the offspring of departed side-saddles, including the girths, to give it a woolly movement in the mouth, and some stuff called by Maynger "mare-hangs grass-hay," which no grown-up man has ever been known to partake of and live. The question is—is half the material I have catalogued ever touched at all? Could it be touched by any being outside the family of the hippopotami, unless, like the hippopotamus, he could crash into the lot all at once, and then lie down and roll in it?

Perhaps of all the social fooling under which we are groaning in these days, the dinner-giving foolery, as at present practised, is the worst. And there is really scarcely a dinner party of the kind I have limned ever given now at which the guests, as a rule, do not silently condemn the odious practice, for, whether the dinner be good or bad, they pass by the half of it, or they take it and mess it, sending their plates off almost untouched, with at least four wine glasses partially full of wasted vintage. I can never go in heart and soul for the emancipation of women as long as they remain in the van of this most vicious proceeding. They are really the culprits. They prostrate themselves before the ogre of fashion whilst they have no real interest in the rites. How is it possible that one woman in twenty, or fifty, can enjoy one of these pompous feeds? Ask them point blank if they enjoy them, and they will tell you—No. They get crammed and jammed together, at a long table groaning with plate and glass and cutlery, with a gormandizing idiot next to them, perhaps, so intent on destroying his digestion that he has not a word to say to them. They are pestered by Mayngers as to wines which they can never drink, and liqueurs of which neither Maynger nor themselves know the names; and, to finish up all, they are made to believe that they will cool their parched and irritated systems with some coloured putty called ice pudding, which no plumber and glazier not mentally imbecile, or mad from his cradle, would condescend to stir up in a paint-pot.

If this were all show and outside work it would be bad enough for its shameful waste, but, unfortunately, this wild eating and drinking touches the inside too. Ask any sensible medical man what he thinks of it, and his answer ought to settle the matter at once. No wonder that when men really desire to enjoy themselves, or to appease real hunger, they fly to wretched chop-houses, and take a juicy morsel of wholesome meat and a pint of the brew of Mr. Michael Thomas Bass, off dirty table cloths and chaotic tables. I appeal to the ladies seriously. This love of show, this strife one with another for crystal display, and plate show-off, and unwholesome contest of dyspeptic victuals, are chiefly attributable to them. From them must our redemption come, and they will be the gainers by it. The easy social enjoyment of our grandfathers is being murdered by these horrid competitive examinations in guzzling and swizzling. Looking back at the dinner parties even in Lancashire five and twenty years ago, and comparing them with those of to-day, I feel that we have gone back in civilization, and only progressed in indigestion and expense. There are, it is true, some men of influence amongst us yet, who have the sense and the courage to adhere to the simpler but by no means less hospitable dinner-giving habits of their forefathers, but they are growing smaller in number every year, and the vast majority of men of wealth and substance go in for turgid ostentation in this regard, and appear to think that if you attempted to abolish dyspepsia and sinful waste, you might as well attempt to restore the Heptarchy.

KNOTT MILL FAIR AND ITS SHOWMEN.

PERHAPS one of the least pleasing discoveries made by a young holiday maker is that a holiday has a business side to it. The young idea is that every human bliss is, as it were, born, not made; that it is spontaneous and unpremeditated, like spring sunshine, or snowdrops, or newly budding hawthorn. To plan pleasure long beforehand—to calculate joy by the almanac—to have your rapture slowly fabricated for you in cold blood, weeks or months before you want it or look for it—is, to say the least of it, rather disenchanting. One can understand the impatience with which a girl almost at the verge of the altar hears the solemn preliminary jargon of wary and passionless solicitors, as they expatiate about sober settlements and talk abominable nonsense about mere property, and such like. A very young lady, who looks at a valentine, for instance, as a burning emanation of deathless affection, and who imagines vaguely that preternatural crops of these fragrant testimonials somehow descend into the Post-office in the middle of the night without the aid of mortal intervention, must needs sigh a little to be told by the newspapers that the valentine manufacturers are already busy on next year's valentines, with a provident and well grounded hope in the eternity of the Registrar-General. So with the pantomimes. One almost ceases to believe that wit and humour are spontaneous, or that Christmas librettos are impromptu, when one hears from people behind the scenes that theatrical managers are ordering their pantomimes for next winter, before we have very well got out of this.

We were set thinking in this fashion, a few days ago, by a little talk we had about our own Knott Mill Fair, with one who knows a good deal about it. We learnt from our interlocutor, who is an accomplished municipal authority, and, indeed, is a kind of Jupiter Olympus to our Easter fair folk, that the business preparations for the juvenile joys of our annual carnival have been completed ever so long ago. The proprietors of the gay and festive caravans which, for a week or more, make Knott Mill gladly multitudinous, were in the habit, we are told, of applying for slices of the fair ground weeks and months before the season. With a feeling of the old superstition upon us, that of all things in the world a fair, and especially Knott Mill Fair, could hardly be subordinated to elaborate business considerations, we felt somehow that the long-familiar and gloriously painted "shows" of our childhood; the brass bands; the gongs and cymbals; and all the spirit-stirring uproar which great Jove's dread clamours counterfeit at Campfield annually, were rather desecrated by contact with a Corporation ledger. To a suggestion of ours that the Corporation would find Dr. Marigold and

Mr. Crummles rather queer customers commercially, our friend Slender (for that was his name) rejoined that it was quite the contrary. They were most exact and reliable in their business transactions, and no revenue could possibly be collected with a smaller per centage of loss. As a class, he said the Showmen were singularly honest and solvent, to the point of eccentricity. "To be sure," pursued Slender, "their epistolary achievements, when corresponding with the 'Authorities,' do not seem to have been framed on any of the models of the Complete Letter-writer, and they are armed stronger in honesty than the mere-tricious arts of mere literary composition; but, when honesty guides the pen, it would be hypercritical indeed to find fault with the spelling."

"Here are a few of 'em," pursued Slender, lighting a little cigar, and taking from his pocket a roll of correspondence like a marshal's bâton in an early stage of manufacture. "The writers may be rather unconventional, now and then, in the matter of orthography, but you'll find that the men, as they say in the sporting advertisements, 'mean business.'" Slender was right. They were letters to delight an editor, for their brevity and their independence of circumlocutory garniture. It was wonderful to see the capacity which the Showman seemed to possess for dispersing himself all over the British Islands. He appeared to have dated his communications from everywhere. He wrote from Liverpool, Chesterton, Oldham, Edinburgh, Todmorden, Glasgow, Bradford, Sydenham, Buxton, Walsall, Stalybridge, Bimgay, Norwich, Stockton-on-Tees, Stoke, and the middle of Manchester and Salford. We half expected an application for "ground" from the Isle of Man or Chicago.

"Why," we exclaimed, "Camp Field will be a kind of Jehosaphat on Easter Monday. Are you sure that all these wandering minstrels, scattered as they are now, will be at Knott Mill on Easter Monday?"

"Every man of 'em," replied Slender, with the confidence of a man who would take it as a favour to be asked to make an affidavit on the spot.

We glanced lightly over the correspondence. "I write to sattisfye you that I intend come to the fair," said one correspondent. There was a fine delicacy of feeling there. The writer could not bear to think of the anguish of the official breast. He must "sattisfye" him. Another pleads that he has not yet "got a Arncer" to his letter, and concludes "hopen that you can ablidge Mee." We learnt that he had been "ablidged." "I wright to asertain," observes one writer, elaborately. Another "wishes to no if he can have ground for a dubell rifle gallery," and begs the favour of an "arncer." An eminent mechanician (as we suppose) wants ground for working "modles." He exhibits a railway train "traviceing" a circle of three feet. This correspondent also announces his intention of exhibiting "a steam man—the only one in the world"—with other "novelties." "The only one in the world." There's the rub. If this steam fellow could be indefinitely multiplied, what a labour-saving gentleman he would be. If Europe could only enlist a sufficient number of steam recruits for its standing armies! How the Right Hon. Robert Lowe would rejoice over possible retrenchments at the Horse Guards if H.R.H. "George" were the Commander-in-Chief of steam battalions. "Yes," interpolated Slender, "one would like to see a steam dandy 'traviceing' St. Ann's Square." "Or," we rejoined, "a steam Corporation penitentially 'traviceing' the haunts of typhus, marshalled thither by Councillor Walker."

"Enough," cried Slender, deprecatingly.

We observed a feature in the correspondence that must be very gratifying to our friend Pitman. Several phonetic reformers write of the fair as "Not Mill." Somebody writing from the Midland Counties places his name at the top of his note, and writes underneath the words "Wild Beast." We feared at first that the Steam Man would have to look to his laurels on Easter Monday, but found afterwards that the poor gentleman who designated himself so opprobiously had written in a hurry. He had had a fire in his Show, the disastrous chances of which he recounted with much feeling. Amongst the incidents of the conflagration it appears that "a kangaroo was pulled up by the tail just as a portion of his hair had got on fire." We shall look out for this unhappy member of the ornithorynci, who has come all the way from the antipodes to endure the ignominy of being pulled up by his tail out of a burning caravan in the county of Warwickshire.

The proprietor of a Prize Pig in the metropolis administers a damper by stating that his Prize Pig Exhibition "will not be there." This is melancholy. Another correspondent refers the question of what he calls "Bussiniss" to the proprietor of the "Ghost Illusion." Writing from Birmingham, a showman places under his autograph the portentous title, "Ghost." Alas, poor Ghost! A fashionable communication from the Crystal Palace, Sydenham, S.E., from a gentleman who describes himself as a "fotografic Artest," thus unbosoms himself in relation to a financial accident:—"Sir, I reseved your Leter and I was verry Sorry the Leter you reseved ad no Stamp on it i put the stamp on in a orry and it must of Com of in the post ofice Box." On such slender threads hang the weightiest affairs of mortals. This, indeed, should admonish us as to the inexpediency of "orry." How has Manchester offended that it should be said so curtly, not to say huffily, "I shall Decline Coming to your manchester fair this year I ham yours truly." This is grievous.

A party from Norwich deplores that "you can Not find me ground for My giant Boy." Alas! but there is hope. The party with the giant Boy will adapt himself to circumstances; he "Will Do with Less ground." Pity that the giant Boy should be the victim of a procrustean destiny. There is a giant Boy amongst us, a J.P. who would, in the local hierarchy, earn the public gratitude if he would be equally accommodating. Everybody wishes that he could be prevailed upon to "Do with Less ground;" but he won't. Even a showman has his commercial solicitude. One having transmitted bullion to the authorities says, "Pleas let Me Kno if you have Received the Deposed Safe? and i ham Much oblige to you"—a happy blending of anxiety and gratitude. Here is a lesson for cavillers. "I am Quiet satesfid with your Araigments." This is indeed a tribute to the municipality. Would that all our brother burgesses could exclaim to the corporation we are "Quiet satesfid." A Manchester entrepeneur writes as laconically as the late Duke of Wellington, "For the ground at Knott Mill I will give £75. Seventy-five pounds." One would think he ought to buy it in fee simple for the money.

The Fair will certainly not be wanting in variety. What with the "traviceing modles," and the steam man, and the ghost, and the wild Beast, one fears that young Manchester will scarcely have stomach for them all. But the cry is still they come. Ground is besought for "my small Exhibition of fat child." Another would "like the ground" that somebody else had last year "for the Exhibition of the Blue Horse." Space is also desired for "Miss Foster, the Durham Giantess." "The living Skeleton" is dying for a bit of ground, 30 feet front, 44 back; which sounds extravagant for a skeleton, living or dead. Then again, ground is wanted for the "great Prize Lancashire Lady thirteen foot wide and twenty Four Foot back." One hopes that every Prize Lancashire Lady is not equally exacting, or it would not take many of them to fill the Fair. We confess to some anxiety about "Miss Lucy." Space is solicited for "Miss Lucy, who is three years old, weighs 22 cwt., measures nearly ten feet in length, and ten feet 6 inches round the girt." "She is accompanied by her daughter, Lady Havelock," now rising 12 months old, "the present owner having the Prince of Wales's Breed in his own." "This is a sight," we are assured, "that every person ought to patronise." It is needless to say that "Miss Lucy" and her daughter are prize pigs, who have "won nine silver cups and medals, and 200 guineas in money." "Miss Lucy" is followed in the list by "Illusions," which Miss Lucy certainly is not. An astute speculator, knowing something of his fellow-creatures, wishes for space for an exhibition of "Illusions." Alas! we have our illusions in Manchester. Why will the gentleman carry coals to Newcastle? As if to dissipate the illusion, we may look on "the Gloucestershire Giantess," who, we learn, "has been seen by most of the crowned heads of Europe." We wonder what the Spanish Isabella thought of this party from Gloucestershire? Our friend Slender, who had been smoking himself into a state of cerebral congestion, remarked of this giantess that she must be a "double Glo'ster." Slender was removed. It seems that the Gloucestershire giantess wants 16 feet front and 27 back. Her weight (fighting?) is said to be 400 lbs.

A showman, who evidently thinks with Cassio that there is much in reputation, trusts that "you was satisfied with my conduct last year." We hope so too. They will surely find ground for "a happy family." It might be contagious. The Fair would be incomplete without a "horned Pony" or a "necromancer," for both of which space is desired. "A Rifle academy" and "my Exhibition which Concist

of Giant Twins," is described by its owner who wants room for them, as "Very Recpitful Consarns." We could only express to our friend Slender, who had listened with incomparable courtesy to our running commentary on the correspondents of the Corporation, that all the contributories to the ancient Easter holiday of Knott Mill would turn out to be respectable "Consarns."

THE BLACK BISHOP AT THE CATHEDRAL.

IF there is any satisfaction in having a thing in black and white the Bishop of Sierra Leone, or, as it seems now to be called, the Niger Territory, must be a most satisfactory person, for he is certainly the blackest black that we ever saw, and, clad in the episcopal rochet and lawn sleeves, he presents a most remarkable contrast. To speak of him as a man of colour is completely incorrect. He is the absence and negation of all colours. Ebony is only a dark grey in comparison of him, and he has not even grey hair. The intense black inside the flower of a field bean is the only thing that can give you an idea of his—complexion shall we call it? His apostolical succession must have come through the darkest ages. The Black Doctor of Eugene Sue's romance must have been a saffrony mulatto compared with Samuel Crowther, D.D.

We do not usually disport ourselves at missionary meetings, but having only a vague idea about this Bishop *in partibus*, we made one of the congregation at the Cathedral last Sunday evening, in order to see for ourselves what sort of an ecclesiastic "Afric's sunny fountains" could turn out. With that nice appreciation of the wants of the public, and of their own comfort, which has generally distinguished the chapter, the Cathedral has been carefully kept closed on Sunday evenings until a few years since, when, by the exertions of Mr. Westmore, the Derby Chapel was fitted up as a small church, the expense being defrayed by private subscription, and, with the Dean's permission, an Evening service was begun. So well was it attended that the congregation were adjourned into the nave, and a clergyman appointed to take charge of (conduct, we believe is the proper reporting word) the service, under the title of the Dean's chaplain or Curate of the Cathedral district. But this was not to be "on the foundation," as a popular ditty says, oh dear no. It was only on the terms of the people, who wanted such an absurd thing as an evening service, doing it themselves, and paying what expenses there might be out of their own pockets, so long as the pittance allowed to the canons was held sacred. The choir not to be outdone, followed the canons every one, and an honorary organist and choir master, with a voluntary choir, comprising some good musicians and good voices—for the two do not always go together—rendered what some people in the country even still call full cathedral service, in very good style, and in fact do yet—did last Sunday at least. Mr. Troutbeck intoned the prayers with his mellow golden voice and—unwonted sight—the Bishop of Manchester occupied his chair and read one of the Lessons. We have seen scarcely enough of our new Bishop to be able to say much about him, but we are disposed to think that he is not to be "done." Vigorous attempts have been made by one school of thought, whatever that means, (we would rather say, school of talk,) to get at him and make him accept the truth as it is in Bardsley, and otherwise commit himself to a faction, but the "nobbling" was unsuccessful. We are beginning to think that the reign of Bardsleyism, in Manchester at all events, will shortly be at an end.

We arrived at the church at the appointed time and found it full, with a block of five or six deep just inside the southern porch, but we managed to alight on our feet by standing at the foot of the gallery stair, where we could hide and see everything. The galleries, which are not usually open on Sunday evenings, were filled and "better filled," and though there were women and girls everywhere, with every variety and hue of hair dressed, and, in the curious modern fashion, undressed, they did not predominate, but were distinctly in the minority. Prayer and praise being ended, his sable Lordship ascended the pulpit and preached the sermon, which, like the old definition of a kiss, consisted of two heads and an application—the nature of the commission given to the apostles and their successors in the Christian ministry, and the extent of the Church's duty under it. The application may be left to the reader's imagination—"What I gives" said an old woman, ungrammatically and let us hope untruthfully, "is nothing to nobody." The Bishop said he had usually urged the claims of the Church Missionary Society, as it was through its instrumentality that he had been converted to Christianity, and afterwards raised to his position in the Church, and that, on going to do what he could to spread the truth among his brethren in his own native country, there was provided, besides the stipend with which he was furnished, a private fund called the West African Bishopric Fund, which remained in this country, but upon which he was to be at liberty to draw from time to time as he might judge necessary in establishing mission stations in the interior. He had received and complied with so many invitations to come over into—what passes in the interior of Africa for—Macedonia, that he was afraid to draw any more bills at a venture, and had therefore declined and had instead, come again hither—this time to ascertain the state of "the fund" himself. This Bishop is evidently a practical man, and might be trusted by the most suspicious and exacting laundress to buy the Glenfield patent starch for her. Of course the reader need not be told that "the funds" were "very low," they always are. The Spanish funds, or whatever the name is, are fools to them.

The sermon was read clearly enough, but with a kind of hesitation, as if he was not sure of his light or was reading a M.S. of somebody else. We have heard the same kind of reading from men who had learned to read after they were grown up, which was probably the case here, as the Bishop is said to have once been a slave. There was a curious tinge of French accent about it, we mean the accent that a Frenchman, speaking English, never gets rid of. There was a vagueness and uncertainty, too, about the v and the th. "Everything" had a narrow escape of becoming "ebbery-ting," without quite becoming it. But there was the rich rollicking of the genuine—shall we say—nigger in the voice, and it was some time before we could get over the idea that the preacher would suddenly break off to give a lively rattle on "the bones" to ease his pent-up feelings, or turn round to his brother of Manchester with a Yah! yah! yah! and propound some ancient conundrum. Of course nothing of the kind occurred, and the discourse was duly brought to a close at the end of a good thirty-five minutes' run without a check.

After all, we don't want the reader to laugh at the Bishop. We have only been recounting the oddity and comicality which we have an unfortunate knack of seeing about most things. St. Irenaeus, the grandson in the faith of the Apostle St. John, was a black; and, later still, Origen was a black, and, as some say, a negro. These men were of the giants of those days.

SUGGESTIONS FOR A DICTIONARY "OF THE PERIOD."

IMPERTINENCE.—Used by a person in the wrong, which he is wrong to use.

IMMEASURABLE.—The conceit of a Prussian, the brag of a Belgian, the pride of an Englishman, the skittishness of a Frenchman.

ABSINTHE.—The genius of Frenchmen who have none, and the death of the genius of those who have any.

BOOK.—A vessel which fills our capacity, without emptying its own.

DUPLICITY.—The amiability of the unamiable.

CALUMNY.—The venom of falsehood.

DEFAMATION.—The venom of truth.

HANGMAN.—One who does to others what he would not be done by

SPECULATOR.—One who, to save himself work, works like a nigger.

NINETEENTH CENTURY.—The age of gold, not the golden age.

ENVY.—The implicit avowal of inferiority; consequently a proof (though involuntary) of modesty.

GOURMAND.—A person who eats *well*, but who eats *badly*.

DICTIONARY.—A guide book, useless for travellers who know the country, dangerous for those who don't.

CONSULT.—To ask another to be of our opinion.

DIPLOMACY.—The longest way from one point to another.

DIGNITY.—The first step of pride, the last of modesty.

SCHOOL.—Place where one always *was*, but never *is* happy.

Dean Swift proposed to put a tax on female beauty, and to leave every lady to rate her own charms. He said the tax would be cheerfully paid, and would be very productive.

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Comic Vocalist.

Louis XIV. asked Bossuet whether it was lawful for a Christian to go to the play. "There are strong reasons against, and great examples in favour of his doing so," replied the bishop.

ORDERS FOR THE PLAY.

BY CHARLES DICKENS.

I WAS once present at a social discussion, which originated by chance. The subject was, What was the most absorbing and longest-lived passion in the human breast? What was the passion so powerful that it would almost induce the generous to be mean, the careless to be cautious, the guileless to be deeply designing, the dove to emulate the serpent? A daily editor of vast experience and great acuteness, who was one of the company, considerably surprised the company by saying, with the greatest confidence, that the passion unquestionably was the passion of getting orders for the play. (Laughter.) There had recently been a great and terrible shipwreck, and a very few of the surviving sailors had escaped from the wreck in an open boat. One of these a young man, on making land, came straight to London, and straight to the newspaper office, with his verbal account of how he had seen a ship go down before his eyes. That young man had witnessed the most fearful contention between the powers of fire and water during the destruction of the ship. He had rowed away among the floating dying and the sinking dead; he had blistered by day, and he had frozen by night, with no shelter and no food. As he told his dismal tale, he rolled his haggard eyes about him, and when he had finished it, and it was noted down from his lips, he was cheered and refreshed. On being asked if anything could be done for him, even then the master passion was so strong within him that he faintly replied he would like an order for the play. (Laughter.) My friend the editor admitted that it certainly was rather a strong case. He said that during his many years of experience he had constantly witnessed an incredible amount of self-prostration and abasement having no other object, and that most invariably on the part of people who could well afford to pay. (Laughter.) This made a great impression on my mind, and I really lived in this faith for some years, till it happened that, one stormy night, I was kindly escorted from a bleak railway station to the little out-of-the-way town that it represented by a sprightly and vivacious newsman. To him I propounded, as he went along under my umbrella—he being most excellent company—this old question, What was the one absorbing passion of the human soul? (Laughter.) He replied without the slightest hesitation that it certainly was the passion for getting your newspaper in advance of your fellow-creatures—(laughter, and "hear hear"),—and also, if you only hired it, for getting it delivered at your door at exactly the same moment as another man who hired the same copy four miles off—(a laugh);—finally, the invincible determination on the part of both men not to believe the time was up when the boy called. (Renewed laughter.) I have not had the opportunity of verifying this; but I have no doubt my friend is perfectly right.—*Speech at the Newsvendors' Dinner in London last week.*

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DE QUINCEY AND HIS DINNERS.

THE daughter of the late Professor Wilson (Christopher North) in her biography of her father, relates an amusing and characteristic story about De Quincey. "I remember," she says, "his coming to Gloucester Place one stormy night. He remained hour after hour, in vain expectation that the waters would assuage, and the hurly-burly cease. There was nothing for it but that our visitor should remain all night. The professor ordered a room to be prepared for him, and they found each other such good company that this accidental detention was prolonged, without further difficulty, for the greater part of a year. During this visit some of his eccentricities did not escape observation. For example, he rarely appeared at the family meals, preferring to dine in his own room at his own hour, not unfrequently turning night into day. His tastes were very simple, though a little troublesome, at least to the servant who prepared his repast. Coffee, boiled rice, and milk, and a piece of mutton from the loin, were the materials that invariably formed his dish. The cook, who had an audience of him daily, received her instructions in silent awe, quite overpowered by his manner; for had he been addressing a duchess, he could scarcely have spoken with more deference. He would couch his request in such terms as these: "Owing to dyspepsia afflicting my system, and the possibility of any additional derangement of the stomach taking place, consequences incalculably distressing would arise—so much so, indeed, as to increase nervous irritation, and prevent me from attending to matters of overwhelming importance, if you do not remember to cut the mutton in a diagonal rather than a longitudinal form." The cook—a Scotchwoman—had great reverence for Mr. De Quincey as a man of genius; but after one of these interviews her patience was pretty well exhausted, and she would say, "Weel, I never heard the like o' that in a' my days. The bodie has an awfu' sicht of words. If it had been my ain maister that was wanting his dinner he would ha' ordered a hale tablefu' wi' little mair than a waff o' his haun; and here's a' this claver aboot a bit o' mutton na bigger than a prin. Mr. De Quinshey would mak' a gran' preacher, though I'm thinking a hantle o' the folk wouldna ken what he was driving at."

TO READERS AND CORRESPONDENTS.

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LIVING MEN OF LETTERS:—
7. Mr. George Grote.
8. ,, Geo. A. Sala.
9. ,, W. Hepworth Dixon.
10. Mrs. Beecher Stowe.
11. Mr. H. W. Longfellow.
12. ,, John Ruskin.
13. ,, Ralph Waldo Emerson.

LANCASHIRE WORTHIES:—
Samuel Crompton.
Barton Booth, (the Actor).
John Collier, (Tim Bobbin).
John Dalton.

SPORTS AND PASTIMES:—
Billiards: Cook v. Bowell.
,, Cook v. Green.
,, Match for the Championship.
,, Sketch of Cook.
,, Sketch of Roberts, sen.
,, Cook v. Boberts, sen., in Manchester.
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The French and English Wrestlers.
The Wrestlers: Lancashire v. France.
A Nemesis Boat Race.
A Paper Chase.

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Mr. Waterhouse and Owens College.
The Manchester Artists' Exhibition.
Are Artists the only Judges of Art.
The Pictures at the Town Hall.
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Portraits at the Public Institutions.
The Picture Sales, Royal Institution.
The Controversy on the Prize Picture.

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5. The Undertaker.
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Sonnet to Spring.
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The Bold 'Bus Driver.'

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The Old Exchange and the New.
Hints for a Catechism of Commerce.
Manners and Customs on 'Change.

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Our Christmas Dinner in the Desert.
Sprigs from an Old Holly Bush.
What became of a Christmas Leg of Mutton.
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The Germans in Manchester.
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———— Thomas Fielden.
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Tramways.
Our Daily Papers.
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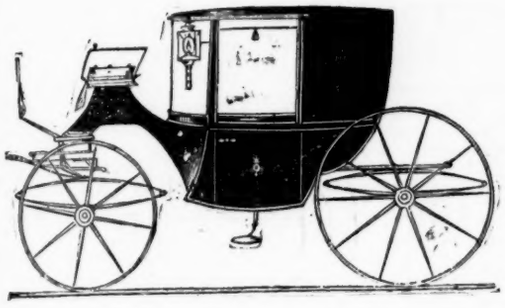

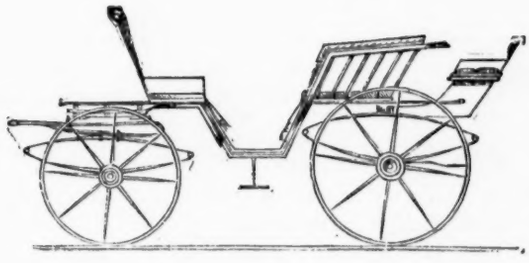

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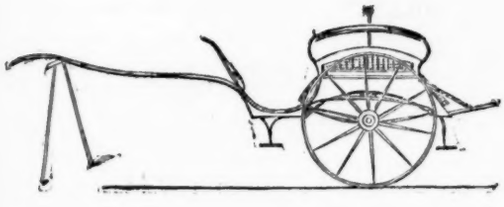

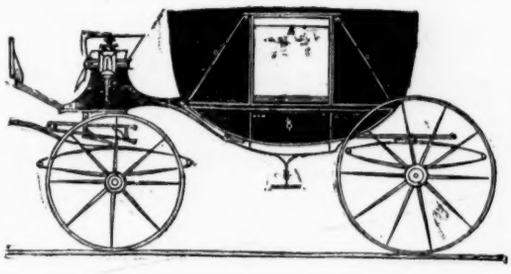

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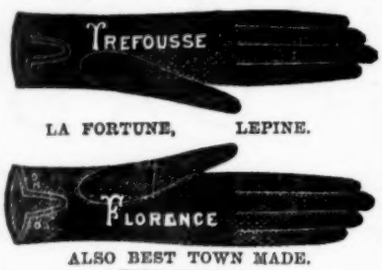

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